

John W. McCarthy
County Administrator



Roger A. Welch, Chairman
S. Bryant Lee, Vice-Chairman
Ronald L. Frazier
Michael J. Biniek
I. Christopher Parrish

**RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

290 Gay Street - P.O. Box 519
Washington, Virginia 22747-0519
Phone: (540)675-5330 Fax: (540)675-5331
www.rappahannockcountyva.gov

**Letter – Expression of Interest
VIA ECFS**

Chairman Thomas Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Jonathan Chambers
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW 20024
Washington, DC

**Re: Expression of Interest – Rural Broadband Experiments
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Chambers,

This letter is to express the County of Rappahannock, Virginia's interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Experiments announced at the January 30th FCC Open Meeting. While we do not have a project to propose, we take this opportunity to document Rappahannock County's need for high-speed Internet service. We respectfully ask the Federal Communications Commission to consider our area's need when making decisions regarding the Rural Broadband Trials and any future initiatives related to the Connect America Fund.

Background

Rappahannock County lies approximately 75 miles west of Washington D.C. in the Piedmont foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It consists of 266 square miles and has a population of approximately 7,500 persons, spread fairly uniformly across the landscape, resulting in the seventh lowest population density in the state. Our location, remote from an interstate highway, major primary highways connected to settled areas and even railroads, render us difficult to serve by wired providers. We currently have one wireless broadband provider serving a very limited number of customers (less than 200). Our Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve the landscape through the continuation of agriculture and growth in our tourism industry which has benefited from our proximity to the metropolitan area. The growth of small businesses has been

seriously retarded by the lack of high speed internet access as the area they may locate to take advantage of our high quality of life are severely limited.

Geographic Territory

The rolling nature of most of our landscape, coupled with the low density of population, makes wireless broadband technology the most viable option for connecting the rural homes and businesses throughout the area of the county away from the county seat of Washington, and the several rural villages.

Proposed technology

Reliable wireless high speed internet access at speeds of from 25 mbps to 50 mbps would be our desired level of service, with pricing of from \$40-80 per month.

Existing Providers

CenturyLink and Verizon offer limited T1 service in close proximity to their wire centers, while Comcast offers high speed internet to areas immediately adjacent to their existing television cable. Combined, these providers reach a minority of homes and businesses in the county, mainly as the telephone providers' service areas overlap that of the cable provider.

Local or Tribal Government Participation

List regional, local, and Tribal Government entities interested in collaborating with providers to bring high-speed Internet to your community.

List of Anchor Institutions

Schools: Rappahannock County High School, Rappahannock County Elementary School, Wakefield Country Day School, Hearthstone School
Libraries: Rappahannock County Library
Healthcare: Rappahannock County Health Department, Mountainside Medicine
Gov't offices: Rappahannock County government offices, Town of Washington
Community Centers: Scrabble School Senior Center

Thank you for considering our Expression of Interest in your decisions about the amount of funding that will be allocated in the Rural Broadband Experiments. We commend the FCC in this effort to connect rural communities and are ready to help you close the digital divide.

Sincerely,



John W. McCarthy
County Administrator
Rappahannock County, Virginia